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THE RETURN.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE PROVOST OF BRUGES," ETC.

WITHIN a hall of princely ornament
A maiden sits; and hourly waits the coming
Of him whose love shall make those splendours hers,
And hail her mistress there;—whose ardent haste,
Fretted by distance and his sovereign's service,
O'erleaps cold ceremony, and with eager prayer
Calls her to meet him here.—The Lord of Varens
Is first in the world's gaze;—the hero, statesman,
The royal favourite, the laurel crowned,
Fresh from the field of glory—and yet here
The Lord of Varens writes himself her slave!
And, as she reads again the burning line,
Pride lights her eye and mantles o'er her cheek,
And swells her woman's breast.—Yet even then,
Even in that glowing moment, pales again
The flushing cheek, and sinks the glance of pride,
As some strange current of unbidden thought
Calls up another love, in gone-by years,
When poor Eugene sat at the young girl's feet;
And, with his thoughtful eye intent on hers,
Asked for no other world, than so to sit
And gaze for ever!—Didst thou sigh, Louise?
Ay, those were days of pure and thrilling joy!
Hand joined to trembling hand, young love's first kiss,
The vow that plighted those two hearts for ever,—
That vow forgotten now!—no, not forgotten—
Witness those trembling lids and that pale cheek!
But he is lost;—he sought, in the hot press
Of the world's struggle, to deserve her hand,
Left his youth's home, and ne'er was heard of more.
Five years she mourned him with a widowed heart,
And then the Lord of Varens, [but once seen
Some two years since, when parting for the wars,
And little noted then,] renewed his suit
By missives sent from foreign lands, which told
How her rare beauty dwelt upon his soul;
Vouching his truth with gifts of wondrous price,
While tidings of his still more wondrous fame
Grew daily louder.—Oh the heart of woman!—
Why is it thus?—So strong, so weak a thing,
So exquisite in all, its very faults
Grow fascinations?—like the amber drops
Which straws invade, yet are no blemish then,
But take a charm from being so enshrined!—
The Lord of Varens triumphed;—the scarce seen,
Scarce known except of fame,—his suit was heard,
And all the memory of Eugene forbid
As a past dream.—And now De Varens comes,
And she shall meet him here, to spare some days
Of an ill brooked delay.—“I am not false—
Blanche, say I am not!—thou, my childhood's friend,
Still my companion here—Blanche! speak to me!
Confirm my failing heart!”—But Blanche is mute:
The oft told tale of deep and constant love
Dwells in her breast, and though she will not blame,
She sighs in silence.

“Lady, at the gate
“One from the Lord of Varens seeks your presence.”
“Admit him—yet no—stay—’twere better thus
“I honour one who comes from such a master.”
Forth from the hall she passed, and on the steps
Received the messenger; who with doffed cap
And grave but courteous reverence, stood before her.
He was a man upon whose open brow
Was written “gentleman,”—whose mien and dress
Spoke one of trust, well chosen for such errand.—
Silent he stood, while, with averted look,
Blanche turned her from the scene she little loved;
But on Louise his thoughtful, calm, clear eye
Fixed, till her own sank from its steady gaze;
And something sinking, trembling at her heart,
Oppressed its utterance. At last he spoke:
“Lady, my master, the great Lord of Varens
“Greet you by me, his servant.”—At the voice
Her changing colour fled, her eye grew wild,
And from her quivering and parted lips
A struggling breath that seemed an unformed word
Came murmuring forth—It sounded like “Eugene!”—
He bided her not—but added, “With this ring
“He bids me greet the lady of his choice,
“And say, that this, once passed in pledge of love,
“Within its emblematic circle, then
“Two hearts are knit for ever.”—“Oh no! no!
“No, not that ring, Eugene! ’twas mine to thee!”
“Lady, forgive my awkward haste—I erred!”
“No—’twas no error, ’twas a just reproach,
“And I deserve it—but I thought thee dead,
“I mourned thee, mourned thee truly—yes, for years,
“Until—oh shame, oh shame!—But it is past—
“Go! tell this Lord, Louise mistook her heart;
“It will not be twice repared.—Say, the love
“He seeks is—yes—enjoy thy triumph—say
“’Tis thine!—And now, farewell!”—The half-spoken word

Trembled on her white lips, and the quick tears
Would not be hid.—“Louise! my own Louise!
“Dost thou then love me still?”—“Demand the proof!”
“Oh should I bid thee share my humble lot?”—
“I would—I will?”—“Think of De Varens’ power!”
“I’ll brave it all!”—“The king’s command?”—“We’ll fly!”
“The world has other lands!—Eugene, with thee
“I will be poor, despised, an exile, all,
“So thou forgive!—Oh can I more atone?”
And then, her maiden modesty at strife
With her full heart, she sank into his arms;
And her pale cheek assumed a paler hue,
And o’er her eyes drooped down the heavy lids,
Until a lovely and unconscious weight
She lay, death’s counterfeit. “Look up, Louise!
“Oh I was much to blame—look up and smile!
“It is thine own Eugene—thine own De Varens!
“Nay, not so wildly!—see, ’tis only I,
“And I am both, and both are only thine.—
“He whom thou knew’st of old as Lord of Varens,
“A traitor, perished by a traitor’s doom.
“His lands and name were given to Eugene,
“And in that name again I wooed Louise,
“As in the name more fitted to deserve her.
“Canst thou forgive my folly? speak to me!”—
She did not speak—but over her fair brow
The crimson spread, and from the brightening eye
Raised to his own, a beam of thrilling joy
Gave the reply.—In his she placed her hand—
Not for the Lord of Varens, but for him,
Her early love, Eugene.—And so it was,—
To fame, and state, and to the gazing world,
He was De Varens still—but for Louise
He had a dearer name; her lust faith,
Still constant to her first, knew but Eugene.

MATERNAL MONITOR.

IMPORTANCE OF THE FIRE SIDE.

As the infant begins to discriminate between the objects around, it soon discovers one countenance that ever smiles upon it with peculiar benignity. When it wakes from its sleep, there is one watchful form ever bent over its cradle. If startled by some unhappy dream, a guardian angel seems ever ready to soothe its fears. If cold, that ministering spirit brings it warmth; if hungry, she feeds it; if in pain, she relieves it; if happy, she caresses it. In joy or sorrow, in weal or woe, she is the first object of its thoughts. Her presence is its heaven. The mother is the deity of infancy.

Now reflect a moment upon the impressible, the susceptible character of this little being, and consider the power of this mother in shaping the fine clay that is entrusted to her hands. Consider with what authority, with what effect, one so loved, so revered, so adored, may speak!

Thus, in the budding spring of life, infancy is the special charge, and subject to the special influence, of the mother. But it soon advances to childhood. Hitherto, it has been a creature of feeling; it now becomes a being of thought. The intellectual eye opens upon the world. It looks abroad, and imagination spreads its fairy wing. Every thing is beautiful, every thing is wonderful. Curiosity is perpetually alive, and questions come thick and fast to the lisping lips. What is this? Who made it? How? When? Wherefore? These are the eager interrogations of childhood. At this period, the child usually becomes fond of the society of his father. He can answer his questions. He can unfold the mysteries which excite the wonder of the childish intellect. He can tell him tales of what he has seen, and lead the child forth in the path of knowledge. The great characteristic of this period of life is an eager desire to obtain new ideas. New ideas to a child are bright as gold to the miser, or gems to a fair lady. The mind of childhood is constantly beset with hunger and thirst for knowledge. It appeals to the father, for he can gratify these burning desires.

How naturally does such a relation beget in the child both affection and reverence! He sees love in the eyes of the father, he hears it in the tones of his voice; and the echo of the young heart gives back love for love. He discovers, too, that his father has knowledge which to him is wonderful. He can tell why the candle goes out, and though he may not be able to satisfy the child where the beautiful flame is gone, he can at least explain why it has vanished, and how it may be recalled. He can tell why the fire burns, why the stream flows, why the trees bow in the breeze. He can tell where the rain comes from, and unfold the mysteries of the clouds. He can explain the forked lightning and the rolling thunder. He can unravel the mighty mysteries of

the sun, the moon, and the stars. He can point beyond to that Omnipotent Being who in goodness and wisdom has made them all.

What a sentiment, compounded of love and reverence towards the father, is thus engendered in the bosom of the child! What a power to instruct, to cultivate, to mould that gentle being, is thus put into the hands of this parent! How powerful is admonition from his lips, how authoritative his example! The father is the deity of childhood. The feeling of the child towards the father is the beginning of that sentiment, which expands with the expanding intellect, and, rising to heaven on the wing of faith, bows in love and reverence before the Great Parent of the universe.

Let us go forward to the period of youth. The mother holds the reins of the soul; the father sways the dominion of the intellect. I do not affirm that there is an exact or complete division of empire between the parents. Both exert a powerful influence over the mind and heart. I mean only to state generally, that the natural power of the mother is exercised rather over the affections, and that of the father over the mind. It is a blended sway, and if exerted in unison, it has the force of destiny. There may be cases in which children may seem to set parental authority at defiance; but these instances, if they actually occur, are rare, and may be regarded as exceptions, which are said to prove the rule. Remember the impressible character of youth, and consider its relation to the parent. Is not the one like the fused metal, and has not the other the power to impress upon it an image ineffaceable as the die upon steel? Nay, is it not matter of fact, attested by familiar observation, that children come forth from the hands of their parents stamped with a character, that seldom deserts them in after life? Are they not impressed with manners, tastes, habits and opinions, which circumstances may modify, but never efface? If the countenance of the child often bears the semblance of the father or mother, do we not still more frequently discover in the offspring the moral impress of the parent?

Is it not true, then, that parents are the law-givers of their children? Does not a mother’s counsel, does not a father’s example, cling to the memory, and haunt us through life? Do we not often find ourselves subject to habitual trains of thought, and if we seek to discover the origin of these, are we not insensibly led back, by some beaten and familiar track, to the paternal threshold? Do we not often discover some home-chiseled grooves in our minds, into which the intellectual machinery seems to slide as by a sort of necessity? Is it not, in short, a proverbial truth that the controlling lessons of life are given beneath the parental roof? I know, indeed, that wayward passions spring up in early life, and, urging us to set authority at defiance, seek to obtain the mastery of the heart. But, though struggling for liberty and license, the child is shaped and moulded by the parent. The stream that bursts from the fountain, and seems to rush forward headlong and self-willed, still turns hither and thither, according to the shape of its mother earth over which it flows. If an obstacle is thrown across its path, it gathers strength, breaks away the barrier, and again bounds forward. It turns, and winds, and proceeds on its course, till it reaches its destiny in the sea. But in all this, it has shaped its course and followed out its career, from bubbling infancy at the fountain to its termination in the great reservoir of waters, according to the channel which its parent earth has provided. Such is the influence of a parent over his child. It has within itself a will, and at its bidding it goes forward; but the parent marks out its track. He may not stop its progress, but he may guide its course. He may not throw a dam across its path, and say to it, hitherto mayest thou go, and no farther; but he may turn it through safe, and gentle, and useful courses, or he may leave it to plunge over wild cataracts, or lose itself in some sandy desert, or collect its strength in a torrent, but to spread ruin and desolation along its borders.

The fireside, then, is a seminary of infinite importance. It is important because it is universal, and because the education it bestows, being woven in with the woof of childhood, gives form and colour to the whole texture of life. There are few who can receive the honours of a college, but all are graduates of the hearth. The learning of the university may fade from the recollection; its classic lore may moulder in the halls of memory. But the simple lessons of home, enameled upon the heart of childhood, defy the rust of years, and out-live the more mature but less vivid pictures of after days. So deep, so lasting, indeed, are the impressions of early life, that you often see a man in the imbecility of age, holding fresh in his recollection the events of